DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 022 SO 022 308

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TITLE The Philosophy and Politics of Multicultural Education and Anti-Racist Education: An Analysis of Current Literature.
PUB DATE Feb 92
NOTE 39p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association for Multicultural Education (Orlando, FL, February 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Context; Curriculum Development; Educational Philosophy; Educational Principles; *Educational Research; Educational Theories; Elementary Secondary Education; *Multicultural Education; *Racial Factors; *Social Change; *Theory Practice Relationship

ABSTRACT

Multicultural education emerged as a curriculum and pedagogical movement in the late 1960s but it has yet to be clearly understood. Several distinct approaches to multicultural education constitute a range of curricular, pedagogical, and social justice perspectives each with significantly different political, social, and economic goals. A healthy discourse between theorist and practioner is necessary for the continued growth of the field. Anti-racist education is a parallel approach that focuses on the issues of social justice and inequality. Anti-racist theorists argue that multicultural approaches to schooling have focused on the curriculum and the classroom at the expense of examining the wider social, political, and economic influences on inequality and racism, and that multiculturalists misunderstand the causes of social inequality when they understand it exclusively in terms of culture. At present, however, there is a very limited amount of research available on functioning multicultural programs and their outcomes. It is clear that multicultural education and anti-racist education are firmly connected in their commitment to work for reform, equity, and justice. It is time for multiculturalists to respond to the concerns of anti-racist educators. An alliance between both groups is essential to the continuing growth of the field. (KM)

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The philosophy and politics of multicultural education and anti-racist education: an analysis of current literature

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Paper presented at the National Association for Multicultural Education Annual Meeting, Orlando, February 1992.

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Introduction

Multicultural education emerged as a curricular and pedagogical movement in the late 1960s. Multiculturalism has been interpreted as one of the outcomes of related reform agendas that sought to increase educational equality by taking into account the diverse values and interests of ethnic groups (Appleton, 1983). A major goal of ethnic revival movements in the 1960s was to seek school reform in order to improve minority chances in schooling and employment (Banks, 1985, 1987). The 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Elementary and Secondary School Act have both acted to support multicultural education by removing barriers to education for minorities by funding programs of desegregation, bilingual education, special needs education, and mainstreaming. Multicultural education constitutes a significant program of reform aimed at changing the curriculum content and educative processes in schools in order to reflect the diverse racial composition of American society (Banks, 1981).

Purpose of the Paper

Sleeter and Grant (1987) identify five major literatures within the multicultural approach to schooling. In part, these five literatures represent the evolution of theory and practice in multicultural education. Each literature also demarcates particular historical and political arguments about the nature and goals of cultural pluralism. These goals are often conflicting. Much of the literature in multicultural education

focuses on curriculum and classroom practice (McCarthy 1990b). Multicultural approaches do not represent a single cohesive theory of education. Rather, multicultural approaches suggest a continuum of theories and practices that are significantly modified by their application in unique historical and cultural contexts. A cohesive theory of multicultural education has yet to emerge (Modgil, Verma, Mallick & Modgil, 1986; Hartnett & Naish, 1987). The apparent absence of a unifying theory of multicultural education illustrates the complexity of implementing multicultural approaches in diverse contexts rather than any inherent failure in the program. Neo-Marxist critiques of schooling (Bowles & Gintis, 1976) have provided significant theoretical transfusions into the conceptualization of multicultural approaches. Poststructuralist accounts of race, gender, and class have also influenced the field (Gilroy, 1987; West, 1982). The notion that education that is multicultural should be emancipatory (Sleeter, 1991) illustrates a recent emphasis in multicultural approaches to schooling. Additionally, there is a movement internationally towards a model of education that is global in its perspectives and curriculum development (Cole, 1984; Lynch, 1989). There is also a legal basis in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) for an approach to schooling that would include the multicultural education approach as a basic human right (McLeod, 1991).

Parallel to this emergent literature has been the rapid rise

to importance of theories and practices of anti-racist education. The British school of education that is anti-racist has been most prolific in developing this body of theory and practice (Troyna & Williams, 1986; Troyna & Carington, 1990). In the United States the work of Berlowitz and Edari (1984) and McCarthy and Apple (1988), McCarthy (1988, 1990b) and Omi and Winant (1986) represent the points of access to accounts of anti-racist education and critiques of mainstream multicultural education.

Mainstream multicultural literature has generally not provided historical analysis, analytical constructs, or explored the philosophical problems entailed in proposals for the reform of school practices and curricula (Olneck, 1990; Sleeter & Grant, 1987). McCarthy (1990b) argues that mainstream multicultural approaches to racism have depended upon essentialist accounts that emphasize the role of the school and the curriculum at the expense of exploring the 'political, cultural, and economic contexts' in which minority groups encounter each other and American society. That is, when multicultural education focuses on the school as the main site of understanding and intervention it effectively divorces the importance of wider social, economic, and political agendas from the possible discourses available to students and teachers. This means that the discourse is made politically safe and nonconfrontational (Carby, 1982; McCarthy, 1990b).

Banks (1987) argues that the apparent failure of multicultural approaches to schooling and curriculum is the

result of 'ineffective teaching materials, ambivalent teacher attitudes towards ethnic diversity, lack of effective in-service training, and lack of administrative support' (p.537). After two decades of multicultural content in the public school social studies curriculum Banks (1987) judges the endeavor an apparent failure when he argues that the dominant assimilationist ideology has prevented multicultural perspectives from permeating the U.S. school curriculum '. . . in any meaningful way' (p. 537).

The developing body of theory and practice in anti-racist education offers a parallel, provocative, and analytical framework that could provide multiculturalists with access to much of the analysis that has been absent in existing mainstream approaches to curriculum reform (Brandt, 1986; McCarthy, 1990b). Cultural studies also offer a fertile related literature that could inform the multicultural discourse (Ogbu, 1978; Omi & Winant, 1983, 1986). This paper argues that the parallel and provocative literature currently available in the anti-racist approach to schooling has much value to recommend it to multiculturalists. Recent publications evidence the fact that multicultural approaches consider anti-racist education to be a defining component of their programs (Todd, 1991; Nieto, 1992). Multicultural approaches to schooling and anti-racist education do not exist at cross purposes. The polarization of issues in these two literatures has suggested two apposing camps where in fact there is a great deal of commonality and agreement.

McCarthy (1990b) argues that despite the acknowledged

acceptance and popularity of multicultural approaches there is mounting evidence to support the view that multiculturalism as it is presently understood has failed to reverse the mounting tide of failure, violence, and prejudice directed at minority groups (p.3). The parallelist theoretical framework (Apple & Weis, 1983) and the theory of nonsynchrony (McCarthy & Apple, 1988; McCarthy, 1988, 1990a, 1990b, 1991a) applied to diverse school environments and the wider social and political context of schooling offer the prospect of a constructive critique of multicultural approaches, and the likelihood of new understanding. A compromise between theories and practices of multicultural and anti-racist education may be possible (Wilson, 1991). The apparent inadequacy of multicultural approaches to dramatically improve educational opportunity and reverse the defection of minorities from public education suggests that anti-racist approaches merit the serious attention of scholars and practitioners.

The Literature of Multicultural Education

Banks (1983, 1989) makes the case that multicultural education is 'an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process'. Sleeter and Grant (1987) observe that multicultural education aims to change the 'content and processes within schools'. The diversity of current literature in multicultural education reflects these somewhat broad categorizations. Sleeter and Grant's (1987) analysis of multicultural education has produced the most useful taxonomy of the literature on multicultural education to date. Sleeter and

Grant build on the conceptual frameworks presented by Gibson (1976) and Pratte (1983). The result of this analysis is the recognition of five categories of multicultural education. Each category constitutes a conceptual framework, a particular approach, and an identifiable literature. The five categories are: (1) Teaching the Culturally Different, (2) A Human Relations Approach, (3) Single Group Studies, (4) The Multicultural Education Approach, and (5) Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist. These categories are closely related to central themes in the historical development of the field.

The development of these five categories of multicultural literature are closely related to what Banks (1983) argues are the four main hypotheses that have characterized approaches to the education of minorities. The 1960s are characterized by two groups of researchers working either on the genetic basis of differences (the low academic achievement of minorities) or the cultural-deprivation hypothesis (poor achievement related to a deprived environment). A third group, the integrationist, began their work in the 1950s. This group believed that when minority students are placed in desegregated, middle-class schools their educational chances are significantly equalized. The Human Relations approach and the Teaching the Culturally different approach are intended to improve minority performance in desegregated schools. In the late 1960s and early 1970s a fourth group of theorists argued that cultural difference must be recognized and incorporated into the school curriculum and

environment. The Single Group Studies, Multicultural Education, and Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approaches relect the fourth theoretical perspective.

Anti-racist education is often considered one of the significant functions of multicultural education (Wilson, 1991). Anti-racist education is also a separate and self-claimed more radical school of thought that argues that recognizing and removing racism from schooling must be the focus of any viable reform agenda in schooling (Troyna and Williams, 1986). Anti-racist approaches claim to be more radical and confrontational (McCarthy, 1990b). This judgement has tended to ignore the existence of a wide continuum of commitment to political action in multicultural approaches. Multicultural education does not live up to the ideological expectations of anti-racist scholars yet it represents a significant enough ideological challenge to the status quo that it is resisted by many educators and public figures.

Whose Multiculturalism?

Multicultural education has established itself in the popular imagination as a somewhat singular entity. U.S. News and World Report claims that 'Multiculturalism is the buzzword of the 90s - and a major theme of books and museum exhibits (Oct, 7, 1991, p.90). Newsweek reports that 'in less than two years multiculturalism has become a well established part of children's literature (Sept. 9, 1991, p.65). The news bastion Time pronounced that 'at this point the debate over multicultural

viewpoints has stumbled into a philosophical muddle from which it is yet to emerge' (July 8, 1991, p. 16). The New York Times in an account of debates about separatist and pluralist movements in curriculum stated that:

> While the movement towards multicultural education has come closer to this goal [curriculum reform] since its inception in the late 1960s, many education experts say it is being sidetracked lately by a growing dispute among educators and scholars over two very different but equally legitimate approaches to curriculum reform. (Section 4A, Nov.4, 1990, p. 23)

Multicultural education has become in twenty years many things to many different groups of people. Gay (1983) argues that establishing equitable treatment and opportunities for ethnic minorities must remain at the center of the multicultural education mandate. Multicultural education has progressively become the site of reform agendas in curriculum and practice for numerous groups. Issues of racism, sexism, handicapism, and recently sexual orientation have all become significant prejudices that the school curriculum is supposed to confront within multicultural reincarnations. Bullivant (1986) finds that for many educators multicultural education is 'the claimed panacea to cure the ills that beset their educational systems' and that furthermore it illustrates 'all the signs of developing into a bandwagon, if not an educational juggernaut (Quoted in Hartnett & Naish, 1987, p. 362). Olneck and Lazerson (1980) in a

careful historical analysis of the role ethnicity and ethnic groups have played in American education make the judgement that:

> It is the very popularity of multicultural education, at least at a rhetorical level, that call into question claims that it represents an appreciable change in the status quo. (p. 319)

This judgement mirrors the claims of critics who charge among other things that multiculturalism is the product of predominant liberal ideologies that support existing conceptions and structures of knowledge, power, and racism (McCarthy, 1990b). However, it seems more important to ask why the implementation of multicultural education has been resisted if in fact multicultural education represents the status quo.

Olneck (1990) in an analysis of both Intercultural and Multicultural education establishes that pluralism as a statement about the 'identities and claims of groups as groups' has normally been confused with the concept of individual differences. Multicultural approaches that seek to change attitudes to individuals rather than recognize and include the cultural identity of ethnic groups have fostered an assimilationist view of culture and an apolitical agenda of curriculum reform. Sleeter and Grant (1987) note that the 'pluralist' Multicultural Education Approach is 'the most popular' in their review of the literature. However, their research shows that the absence of descriptions of the approach being utilized suggests that it is 'not the main approach

implemented' (p.432). McCarthy (1990b) argues that pluralist approaches are muted by multicultural curricula and practices that reify mainstream culture, fail to challenge existing school ideologies and practices, and continue to perpetuate essentialist accounts of minority school failure.

Olneck (1990) argues convincingly that multicultural programs reflect middle-class liberal reform orientations towards private individual self-expression and cultural appreciation. Multicultural education, as it is presently conceived, does little to promote the social, economic, and political rights of ethnic minority groups. The bifurcation of 'private cultural and public political domains' effectively depoliticizes the multicultural agenda in schools (p. 163).

When multicultural education focuses on the individual and the school as the main sites of understanding and intervention it effectively divorces students and teachers from the wider social, economic, and political agendas implicated in inequality and racism. That is, the discourse within schools is made safe. In multicultural approaches that seek to empower students with knowledge bases beyond the students' experience and the schools' horizon, exploding the boundary between the individual and the ethnic group and the school and the community is a first priority (Cummins, 1986; Sleeter, 1991).

Sleeter (1991) maintains that the boundary between school and community must be understood as a type of semipermeable membrane. The dynamics of the power relations between the school

and the community need to be explicated (discovered by students) in order for the marginalizing practices of the school to make sense to students who function in both private and public realms. Anti-racist accounts of schooling emphazise that schools are frequently ignored as sites of racism and social reproduction in mainstream multicultural accounts (McCarthy, 1990b; Omi & Winant, 1981). A truly emancipatory approach to education in this sense would necessarily confront the school's complicity in the maintenance of a false personna of racial, cultural and educational neutrality.

Curriculum politics

McCarthy (1990b) claims that mainstream multicultural approaches fail to successfully confront the 'persistence of racial inequality in schooling' (p.2). The injection of racism into liberal accounts of educational inequality is generally too politically volitile. Mainstream multicultural accounts depoliticize the relationships between race and unequal school achievement (McCarthy, 1990b; Sarup, 1986). At first glance the claim that there is a lack of political engagement in multicultural approaches appears to be inaccurate. In this decade of political correctness, Afrocentric schools and curriculum, and the prospect of 1992 being the year that Columbus might wish he had not invaded America can it be that multiculturalism is apolitical? The briefest catalogue of recent articles dealing with multicultural education in popular publications shows it to be both villan and savior and decidely

political (Educational Leadership, Dec/Jan 1991, 1992; Time, Feb 3, 1992; Education Week, Feb 5, 1992).

McCarthy (1990a) argues that multicultural approaches, that he characterizes as mainstream and liberal, have failed to articulate a radical political agenda for social change. Instead, arguments for cultural competence and social reform in multicultural approaches have focused on the curriculum (Banks, 1981; Gollnick, 1980). Debates about the constitution of culture and about which conception of culture will be valorized in the school curriculum have mobilized much of the present 'politics' of multiculturalism (Banks, 1983; Beyer & Apple, 1988). It is claimed that a curriculum that represents the culture, history, and language of minority students provides positive and inclusive images that enhance academic achievement for minority students according to multiculturalists (Banks, 1983; Gollnick & Chinn, 1986). The second major claim made for a culturally representative curriculum is that programs that enhance self and mutal awareness will lead to a reduction of prejudice in students and teachers.

Social reconstructionist theories hold that social ills and injustices can be successfully addressed and resolved within the school curriculum (Kliebard, 1986). However, Neo-Marxist and anti-racist theorists point out that a curriculum that promises social transformation based on cultural inclusiveness is destined to sidetrack the discourse away from engaging in the more difficult and politically sensitive questions. The persistence

of racism in employment practices, campus racism, minority unemployment, and increasing numbers of minority school dropouts offer graphic examples of the failure of curriculum and school reform alone to transform entrenched social injustices. Texts that emphasize cultural inclusiveness readily include the study and reduction of racism as fundemental elements of their program (Baruth & Manning, 1992; Nieto, 1992).

McCarthy (1990b) and Sarup (1986) claim that multicultural models of curriculum systematically detour the discourse from the business of confronting the real sources of inequality and racism in schooling. When multicultural curriculum approaches conform to the dominant educational agenda of cultural inclusion and equality of educational opportunity they become subject to the hegemonic influences of the dominant and legitimizing educational discourse that they should be making problematic; if not rejecting. For example, a critical multicultural approach to curriculum would necessarily challenge ability grouping and tracking practices that systematically disadvantage minority students (Meier & Stewart, 1991; Sleeter, 1991). Sleeter and Grant (1987) argue that ability grouping and tracking, standardized tests, and the lack of minority teachers in schools are issues central to the multicultural education approach. Sleeter and Grant (1987) observe that multicultural approaches generally concentrate on developing curriculum and instruction practices. Individual teachers and their classrooms form the effective conceptual boundary of many multicultural texts. Not

only teachers' classroom practices but whole school bureaucracies need to change dramatically if schools are going to reflect a genuine democratic ethos (McCarthy 1991). Multicultural education has generally been framed around curriculum reforms but this does not exclude the development of approaches that include a critique of school bureaucracies and practices.

A nascent political agenda appears to be present in the Education That Is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approach. Sleeter's (1991) edited volume, Empowerment through Multicultural Education, represents a philosophical bridge between mainstream multicultural approaches and the formative Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist approach. The Freirian vision of empowerment filtered through the writings of Giroux (1983, 1988) and McLaren (1989) constitutes the ethical, theoretical, and practical underpinning for the case studies and essays presented in this volume. These case studies describe ability grouping, knowledge selection, gender stereotyping (to name a few) and implicate the whole school environment in the maintenance of inequality.

Sleeter (1991) observes that there is a natural alliance of interests between multicultural education, feminist teaching, and critical pedagogy (p.9). Empowerment strategies include individual and group conceptions of power mobilization. Empowerment is legitimately and necessarily connected to protest, social action, and reform. Sleeter (1991) writes that:

This book links power and empowerment with race, social

> class, and gender issues in education, and it amplifies attention to multicultural education's social change mission. (p. 2)

Emancipatory multicultural education would ideally make schools the site of radical political formation and potential political action carried out by empowered coalitions of students and teachers. The linkage between critical pedagogy, new knowledge, and radicalized and empowering action by students on public school sites has not been established. The hegemonic mechanisms of control and conformity in schooling are well established (Bernstein, 1982; Bowles & Gintis, 1976, Troyna & Williams, 1986). Changes in the the culture of the school do not guarantee a complementary reform in public social agendas. Racist and sexist practices in employment for example remain to confound the potential gains made in multicultural schools for women, minority, poor, and working class students. Necessarily the empowering of students and the radicalization of teachers would call into question all aspects of educational practice, knowledge selection, and equal access to educational resources. It seems unlikely that present configurations of limited teacher power and student powerlessness offer the hope of significant emancipatory reforms in schooling. However, when multicultural approaches are made essential to all aspects of school administration and practice within a context of unified goals the empowering function of multicultural education may be realized.

Anti-racist education

The strong program of anti-racist education claims that multicultural education is constituted within exisiting liberal discourses that overtly and covertly sustain racist ideologies and practices in schools (Carby, 1982; Brandt, 1986; McCarthy, 1990b). Anti-racist scholars believe that in uncovering the fundementally racist ideologies and practices of the state the school, as an agent of the state, will be recognized as an institution that cultivates and sustains racist agendas (McCarthy, 1990b). The organization of knowledge in the school and the profoundly conservative milieu of the school mitigate against a thoroughgoing relational and synthetic account of the persistence of racism in schooling (McCarthy, 1990b, p. 6). The fundamental goals of anti-racist education revolve around issues of justice in education. Anti-racist approaches to teaching claim that effective anti-racist pedagogy is confrontational. Teachers must deal with 'racism, struggle, and power' in ways that are neither 'oppressive, condescending nor patronizing' (Brandt, 1986).

Apple and Weis (1983) offer a theoretical perspective of racial formation that expands the spheres of influence implicated in racist practices in schools. Their argument, called the parallelist approach, moves beyond linear single cause accounts of racism found in mainstream and neo-Marxist explanations. The parallelist model claims that the subtle dynamics of class, race and gender intersect with the interests of spheres of economic, cultural, and political power. In any one instance of racial

formation the relationships between the dynamics of class, race, and gender can be related to each other and the three possible spheres (economic, cultural, and political) in ways that offer a more contextualized and explanatory account of racist influences on schooling, teaching, and learning (McCarthy, 1990b, p 81).

The parallelist theory offers a productive conception of the dynamics of oppression that begins to get at the complexity of race, gender, and class formation. A major criticism has been that multicultural approaches have failed to explore the complex operation of race, class, and gender formation and the ubiquitous existence of racism. When the parallelist analysis is applied to schools and classrooms the symmetry of the model breaks down. Sarup (1986) observes that the role of resistance in students and teachers is underestimated by parallelist models of class reproduction. Willis's study of 'the lads' offers an example of the counterintuitive and contradictory findings that individual studies uncover (1981). The construction of racism in public and private settings and the oppression of women at home and in the workplace both illustrate the need to address the variable dynamics and experiences of oppression (McCarthy, 1990b). Banks (1989) argues that multicultural approaches need to make sense of the total environment of the school. The evidence of oppression within school environments is much more complex and contradictory than theoretical models of raced, classed, and gendered experience have thus far indicated (Omi and Winant, 1986; Sarup, 1986; McCarthy, 1990b).

Multicultural approaches to schooling understood in anti-racist terms represent a curricular truce between dominant cultural interests and discontented racial minorities. The multicultural curriculum is intended to foster white sensitivity towards minority individuals while at the same time enhancing minority self-image. This type of approach effectively avoids the real issue of white racism and fails to acknowledge the complex and relational nature of racial domination according to anti-racist theorists (Berlowitz, 1984; Carby, 1982; Mullard, 1985). The curriculum agenda of sensitivity and inclusion does result in positive gains in the school curriculum but this focus effectively depoliticizes the nature and persistence of racism in schooling and society (McCarthy, 1988). This critique operates for only one facet of the multicultural construct. The anti-racist agenda is not excluded from multicultural education as Sleeter (1991) observes.

Marxist structural explanations of racism are anchored in the dynamics of class differences (Edari, 1984). McCarthy (1988) points out that racism existed prior to capitalism. Cultural Marxists argue that racism cannot be exclusively understood in terms of class difference. The persistence of racism in schooling suggests strongly that schools themselves are significant sites for the formation and reproduction of racism. Minority identity and gender roles are not simply the outcomes of class difference. Omi and Winant (1986) write that the complexity of cultural identity and its formation in groups is

lost in both mainstream and neo-Marxist accounts of racial inequality because they 'are "essentialist" in that they eliminate the "noise" of multidimensionality, historical variability, and subjectivity from their explanations of cultural difference' (Quoted in McCarthy, 1988, p. 272). Said (1986) believes that the differential and complex dynamics of race and gender inequality may be better understood when the voices of minority groups give expression to their own histories of struggle and oppression. Giving voice to minority history and interests in their own voices has become a central concern of multicultural scholars.

Theoretical reform in approaches to racial inequality in schooling have most frequently been constituted within existing educational discourses. Minority demands for social justice are reformulated in terms such as multicultural curricula and special programs like Head Start for at risk youth. Some theorists have attempted to connect the transformation of the school environment to radical changes in capitalism and democracy (Giroux, 1985; Freire, 1985, 1989). McCarthy (1990b) believes that the emergent theory of cultural Marxism presents a conceptual framework that can address the complex and often contradictory experiences of minority groups in schooling. To this purpose McCarthy (1988a, 1988b, 1990a, 1990b, 1991a, 1991b) employs the theoretical construct of nonsynchronous relations to develop an approach to the study of inequality in schooling that rejects 'monolithic or homogenous' experiences of raced, gendered, and classed existence

in schools.

McCarthy's account of a theory of nonsynchrony is described in Race and Curriculum, (1990). McCarthy (1990b) relies on the concept of nonsynchrony introduced by Hicks (1981). Hicks (1981) states:

> By nonsynchrony I mean the concept that individuals (or groups), in their relation to their economic and political system, do not share similar consciousness of that system or similar needs within it at the same point in time. (p. 221)

A nonsynchronous approach attempts to make sense of the ways in which individuals (or groups) make sense of and are acted upon by social, economic, and political conditions. Perceptions, needs, and individual identity mediate the ways in which these conditions influence individual lives.

The intersection of race, class, and gender for minority students is further affected by interactions within the school setting. The dominant forms of these interactions are described as relations of competition, exploitation, domination, and cultural selection (McCarthy, 1990b, p. 84). A nonsynchronous approach to racial inequality in schooling seeks to make sense of the complexity of individual, group, institutional, and cultural factors that contribute to the formation and maintenance of inequality. For example, the interests of the black middle class and the black underclass have appeared to be significantly different. An upwardly mobile black middle class has often removed itself in 'social, educational and poltical terms' from

the reality and cultural stereotypes of the poor black underclass (McCarthy, 1990b, p. 87). The implications of relations of competition, exploitation, domination, and cultural selection for these two different classes of black students produce nonsynchronous and contradictory experiences of racism and inequality in schools (Ogbu, 1988). These students will have dramatically different economic, political, and cultural options available to them as a consequence of these differences.

A nonsynchronous approach to racism in schooling contextualizes the discourse of anti-racism in communities and acknowledges the complex, variable, and contradictory experiences of racism that occur within individuals and groups. This approach connects racism to the micropractices that constitute institutional schooling. At the same time school practices and curriculum are understood in terms of the larger cultural, political, and economic spheres.

Implicit in the nonsynchronous approach to racial inequality is the deconstruction and critique of 'monolithic or homogeneous' curriculum and pedagogical practices that fail to comprehend the contradictions of race, class, and gender within schools and society (McCarthy, 1990b, p. 95). Sleeter and Grant (1987) argue that a critical approach to multicultural literature will not only contribute to theory and practice but also provide a 'critical examination of its limitations' (p. 422). McCarthy (1990b) presents a systematic deconstruction of the assumptions, goals, and outcomes of multicultural approaches to curriculum

reform. There has been a tendency to respond to theoretical criticisms of multicultural approaches by simply suggesting that the critic has failed to understand what multiculturalism is or to suggest that the critic has focused on one unrepresentative approach to multiculturalism (Sleeter, 1991, p. 9 - 11). The nonsynchronous approach to racial inequality offers a critical and potentially reflective paradigm for researchers. Multicultural discourse would do well to heed the criticisms offered by anti-racist theorists.

Multicultural versus Anti-racist education

Early multicultural approaches to inequality tended to understand the problem as one of prejudice, misunderstanding, and ignorance. Present multicultural curriculum approaches seek to develop cultural awareness and promote the cultural and political interests of minority groups. Anti-racist approaches address the relationships between state political structures and school bureaucracy, power and access to cultural capital, and investigations of the community and school contexts of racism. In multicultural approaches the problem of inequality might be understood as one of cultural imperialism or ethnocentrism. In anti-racist approaches the problem of school injustice is understood as institutional and individual racism.

Recently multicultural approaches have begun to amplify and include the anti-racist program of reforms. Multiculturalism conceptualized as empowerment illustrates this development (Sleeter, 1991). Multicultural education is understood as

empowering minority students when it validates their cultural identities, encourages democratic values, and teaches students to think critically and to act politically (Sleeter, 1991, p. 9). Sleeter and Grant (1987) conclude that the multicultural education approach emphasizes the role of culture at the expense of including accounts of social stratification. The social justice impulse in multiculturalism is muted in programs that focus predominantly on culture. Sleeter and Grant (1987) state:

> Social stratification, by contrast is discussed mainly in short articles and usually in little detail. Although both [culture and social stratification] can be attended to simultuaneously (for example, by fighting institutional racism while promoting the cultures of minority groups), few authors emphasize both or discuss their relative importance. This inadequate coverage is significant because social stratification, as well as racial oppression, has provided much of the impetus for recognizing the need for multicultural education. The desire not to have to assimilate culturally has been only part of the concern; the desire to have power and economic resources equal to Whites has also been a concern. Emphasizing culture at the expense of social stratification may suggest to those Whites who prefer not to confront racism that maintaining and valuing cultural differences is the main goal of multicultural education. (p. 433)

The anti-racist approach to minority power argues that

dismantling and reconstructing schooling and society are the necessary processes that will lead to minority power (Brandt, 1986, p. 121). Brandt (1986) states that:

> It becomes clear that racism in education - like any other form of racism - will not disappear with palliative and tokenistic measures, such as depoliticized and decontextualized cultural exchange or cultural exploration. What is required is positive action. Therefore, as long as the education system, like other social and state institutions, is racist, an adequate, appropriate and just education system must be, by definition, anti-racist. That is to say, there is a real need for a coherent and holistic, anti-racist approach, which addresses both directly and indirectly the ways in which the school produces, reproduces, and transmits racism, both in the school and society. (p. 134)

The need for a 'coherent and holistic' multicultural approach to national policy agendas is acknowledged by multiculturalists. Sleeter and Grant (1987) observe that there is an immediate need to expand the context of the discourse in multicultural education. Multicultural theorists and educators need to move beyond the individual 'classroom or school level' and address multicultural policy at the state and national levels. Sleeter and Grant (1987) also observe the need in multicultural approaches for accounts of gender difference, minority history, teacher education, and instructional processes

to name a few. These observations mesh readily will the goals of anti-racist education. The apparent division between multicultural and anti-racist approaches seems to almost disappear when Sleeter and Grant (1987) state that:

> In order to progress, however, the literature [in multicultural education] should grapple more with the relationship of social stratification to culture, as well as consider the integration of race, class, and gender factors when examining oppression. Authors should also endeavor to connect the approach more directly with established bodies of inquiry on educational history and social policy, curriculum theory, the hidden curriculum, and the sorting function of schools. (p.434)

McLeod (1991) in discussing the status of multiculturalism and human rights education in Canada cites the example of an Ontario report titled, The Development of a Policy on Race and Ethnocultural Equity, (1987). The committee that produced the report had proponents from both the multicultural camp and the anti-racist camp. This report systematically misunderstands and devalues multicultural approaches in order to promote the anti-racist approach to schooling. Anti-racist education is described in the report as 'education that is truly multicultural.' The political divisiveness illustrated by this report points out the potential for undermining support for multicultural education. Todd (1991) argues that the debate between multiculturalists and anti-racists has highlighted the central role of schools and

school practice in questions of social justice and equality. Todd (1991) offers the judgement of Craft and Kline (1986) as a useful commentary on the status of this debate:

> The polarisation in the current literature, of 'multiculturalists' as simply concerned with diversity, and 'anti-racists' as concerned with the struggle for equality, is not helpful to practice in schools; these are not polar opposites; they share a complex interrelationship . . . The 'multicultural' and 'antiracist' approaches are . . . not alternatives, but interlocking parts of one whole; each is essential, but neither is sufficient on its own. (p. 55)

The recent storm of debate surrounding a report proposing significant revison of the State of New York social studies curriculum offers an example of cultural difference being perceived as a threat to national unity. The report, One Nation, Many People: A Declaration of Cultural Interdependence, states a strong commitment to multicultural education throughout the school curriculum. Minority culture, while valued sufficiently enough to warrant some inclusion in the social studies curriculum, is seen by critics of this report as a threat to national unity (State of New York Social Studies Committee, 1991, p. 89). Critics argue that the report's approach to the social studies curriculum will promote cultural 'separatism and ethnic fragmentation.' The report's claims that 'students must be taught social criticism' and 'see themselves as active markers and changers of culture and society' and 'promote economic

fairness' are viewed as a threat to the mission of the school by critics. Ravitch (1990) argues that New York's 'particularistic' approach to the social studies curriculum will foster the 'politicization of all curricula in the schools.' Both multicultural and anti-racist approaches constitute a threat to the educational and social status quo according to critics of this social studies proposal. Theorists and practitioners will need to evaluate the state of current practice, research, and literature in multicultural and anti-racist education if they are going to respond to the challenge offered by conservative critics.

Conclusion

Grant and Sleeter (1987) establish that multicultural education is not a unitary approach to schooling. Rather, five distinct approaches in multicultural education constitute a range of curricular, pedagogical, and social justice perspectives. The political, social, and economic goals of these five approaches also differ significantly. The field of multicultural education is in a period of rapid development and conceptual change. The alliance between critical pedagogy and multicultural education and the reformulation 'education that is multicultural' both illustrate these changes. Multicultural education has become a commonplace but much misunderstood term. A healthy discourse between theorists and practitioners is necessary to the continued growth of the field.

Anti-racist education is a parallel approach that focuses on

the issues of social justice and inequality. Anti-racist theorists argue that schools are significant sites of racial, gender, and class formation. Schools themselves are implicated in numerous forms of discrimination by virtue of their relationship to the economic, social, and political goals of the state. The anti-racist agenda seeks to uncover and confront the causes of inequality in both schooling and society. The parallelist position and the theory of nonsynchrony offer important conceptualizations of raced, gendered and classed existence for individuals and groups. The theory of nonsynchrony challenges explanations of inequality that are linear and reductionist. This theoretical perspective understands racism and inequality in multidimensional terms. Individual and group experiences of prejudice and inequality do not conform to homogenous explanations. The relations of competition, exploitation, domination, and cultural selection impact student's lives in dramatically different ways (McCarthy, 1990b). Historical differences and individual subjectivities mediate the experience of inequality in variable and contradictory ways. Inequality and racism need be understood in individual, school, and community contexts. Anti-racist education confronts school bureaucracy, power, the control of cultural capital, and investigates the school's complicity in racism. These theoretical developments represent important contributions towards our understanding of the complexity of prejudice and oppression.

Anti-racist theorists argue that multicultural approaches to schooling have focused on the curriculum and the classroom at the expense of examining the wider social, political, and economic influences on inequality and racism. The charge that this strategy effectively distances multicultural education from confrontational politics is in part negated by the evidence of the current storm surrounding the reform of the social studies curriculum. However, a healthy discourse requires that arguments of this type be met by judgements based on a program of research and publication in the field of multicultural education. At present there is a very limited amount of research available on functioning multicultural programs and their outcomes (Olneck, 1990; Sleeter and Grant, 1987).

Are multicultural education and anti-racist education incommensurable approaches to inequality in schooling? This review of literature indicates that both approaches are closely related. There is a high degree of mistrust and misunderstanding between these two groups of theorists and practitioners. Anti-racist educators believe that minority inequality is best understood in terms of race. Anti-racist theorists claim that multiculturalists misunderstand the causes of social inequality when they understand it exclusively in terms of culture. This judgment ignores the fact that anti-racist education is fundemental to multicultural education. It is clear that both multicultural education and anti-racist education are firmly connected in their commitment to work for reform, equity, and

justice. The persistence of inequality, racism, employment discrimination against minorities, and campus violence directed against minorities all indicate that multicultural education as it is presently conceptualized has been unable to effectively reform all school curricula or change social realities. It is time for multiculturalists to respond to the charges made by anti-racist educators. An alliance between anti-racist educators and multicultural educators seems not only natural but essential to the continuing growth of the field.

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